

Caring About Lives in Maine Honorees

From around the state, the Maine Youth Suicide Prevention Program has collected stories of people and organizations that are advancing our goal:

- To reduce the incidence of suicidal behavior in Maine

The second group to be recognized is listed below. We invite you to nominate additional people who will be recognized in April at the Beyond the Basics of Suicide Prevention conference.

1. Sandy Fisher has been a powerful survivor voice and tireless advocate for suicide prevention. She helped to start a transitions program for high school seniors at Deering High School and founded the Vera Foundation in memory of her son, Scott. When this foundation was disbanded, Sandy donated the assets to Medical Care Development for suicide prevention work.
2. Janet Grinis created an active Suicide Prevention Coalition comprised of tribal Micmac members, staff, and members of the surrounding community. This group has been a valuable resource for the tribe and has brought to the forefront an issue that had largely been unrecognized.
3. Hillary Groves has turned personal tragedy, the loss of her best friend to suicide, to a public mission of educating more people about suicide. Hillary has worked with Thrive staff to bring awareness to this topic and has organized an Out of Darkness walk which will be held next month in Lewiston.
4. Kennebec county sheriff's deputies, Scott Cyrway and Joshua Hardy, responded to a 911 call reporting that a man had locked himself in his garage with a rifle. The two deputies spent about 2 ½ hours negotiating with a despondent man and succeeded in convincing the man to give up his weapon. "The deputies in this situation put themselves in extreme harm's way in an attempt to help this man," according to Sheriff Randall Liberty.
5. Melissa McStay organized an awareness training for the staff of Deering High School and personally delivered suicide prevention lessons to all high school seniors as part of mandatory English. She then took her expertise to assist MYSPP in creating lessons that are now available to all schools in Maine.

6. Cheryl Morin has been providing awareness programs around the state and raising funds for the JD Foundation, in memory of her son, Joe Day. The Foundation holds an annual yard sale and uses the money to assist people in need of help as well as providing a scholarship to deserving youth.
7. Colonel John Mosher and Major Jay Brock hit the nation's roads, byways and highways to log 21 marathons in 21 days, from Kittery, Maine to Arlington National Cemetery. They hope the run, and the ensuing media attention, will reduce the number of American veterans who daily die by suicide and encourage their generation of soldiers to live life to its fullest.
8. Students Assistance Teams exist in more than 50% of Maine schools. People serving on these teams provide passion and energy to support and assist students every day to feel successful and connected to their schools, critical protective factors for at-risk youth. Accepting this award on behalf of the teams are Ansley Newton and Nancy Drake from the Maine Department of Education.
9. Berkeley Schmidt was chosen as Ms. Maine International in 2009. She used this opportunity to make suicide prevention her platform and cause, in the process educating many people about the signs of suicide. Berkeley was a runner-up in the Miss Maine pageant this year and again spoke about suicide prevention to an audience of more than 300 people.
10. If MYSPP had an ambassador category for the Caring About Lives in Maine awards, Pete Spears would qualify as our first recipient. Pete works for the Department of Education and has assisted health teachers around the state to incorporate suicide prevention into their classes. He serves as a co-trainer for both the Lifelines and Transitions teacher training, has aligned lessons to the Maine Learning Results, is serving on the middle school lessons development group, and is always looking for ways to publicize the work of MYSPP.
11. After the death by suicide of a Bangor Area High School sophomore, Stephanie Wain, then a senior at the school, felt she needed to do something. Despite a heavy schedule of school and other activities, Stephanie didn't think twice about taking action. She started the Have A Heart campaign, which urged students to pledge to look out for each other and offer help if a fellow student is facing a problem. One-third of the student body signed the pledge.